

PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE ORGANIZATION OF THE MILITIA.

No. 1.

COPY OF A DESPATCH FROM GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE TO HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF
NEWCASTLE.

Government House,
Auckland, New Zealand,
5th July, 1861.

MY LORD DUKE,—

I have the honor to forward copies of certain Letters from Lieut.-General Cameron, C.B., relative to the organization of the New Zealand Militia, together with a Memorandum from the Colonial Secretary in reply.

No. 95.
MILITARY.

In a country occupied, as the North Island of New Zealand is, the organization of a Militia must always be a matter of great difficulty, and is extremely unpopular.

The European population of this Island was estimated at 40,159 in December, 1860; the adult male population cannot therefore be estimated at more than 8000; of these many are scattered over the country (especially in the North) whence they could never be collected, even if it were expedient to bring them away from their homes.

It would be useless to ask for Volunteers from the Middle Island or from the Australian Colonies because a Militia (though not less brave) is by no means as effective as the regular troops, and is three times as expensive when engaged at a distance from home.

I have in a previous Despatch explained that the employment of settlers (except close to their own houses) is also objectionable, because it must prevent their producing the revenue which enables the Colony to defray its share of the expenses of the war; and if they are taken from their occupations they must themselves become dependent on resources which would fail for want of their support.

The Colonial Secretary observes that under the Act which was repealed in 1860, there was a respectable Militia Force, and that it was not thought expedient to bring the new Act in force until a cessation of hostilities permitted the old Militia to be disbanded without danger, and gave time for a new one to be enrolled. The new Act therefore was not put in force until my return from Taranaki in March, and I find a Memorandum of mine, dated 22nd March, urging Ministers to place the Militia on the best and most efficient footing without loss of time. From that time I have constantly urged the subject verbally, and I trust that ere long the Militia will be made as effective as possible.

The number of Rifles and Muskets now belonging to the Colonial Government amounts to 5,560, and 1200 more rifles are expected in one of the first ships from England.

I have, &c.,

T. GORE BROWNE.

His Grace the Duke of Newcastle, K.G.,
&c., &c., &c.

Enclosure 1 in No. 1.

LIEUT.-GENERAL CAMERON TO GOVERNOR GORE BROWNE.

Auckland, 15th June, 1861.

SIR,—

As I understand that the General Assembly will shortly consider the subject of the Military defences of the Colony, I am desirous of bringing to your Excellency's notice an alteration that I would recommend being made in the present Militia Regulations by which the usefulness of that force will be increased.

Your Excellency is aware that should the troops advance far into the interior of the country, a very considerable number of men would necessarily be employed in guarding depots of supply, escorting convoys, furnishing drivers to the transport service, and occupying the different posts which must be established along the line of march to keep the communication open with the base of operations. If these duties devolve exclusively upon the regular troops, the force destined to act against the enemy would be most seriously reduced, and I need not point out to your Excellency how important it is that the Militia shall be available for some of the services that I have enumerated, and for which they would be well adapted. By the last Act, which limits the radius of Militia districts to fifteen miles, the Auckland Militia cannot be called upon for service beyond four or five miles south of Drury. In the event of an advance by Havelock it would be highly desirable that they should be available for duty as far as that point at least, but as it is not impossible that some other routes may be selected, I would recommend that the Law should be altered so that they may be liable for service, if necessary, in any part of the Province.